

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L USNATO 0839

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MPOL, NATO

SUBJ: BASIC ISSUES AND STANDARDIZATION: ANTI-TANK WEAPONS

DA FOR DAMA-PPI (LTC R. MANHAN).

REF: A. USNATO 6729 (74); B. USNATO 0559 (75); C. USNATO 1901 (74);

D. USNATO 6104 (74); E. USNATO 3083 (74)

BEGIN SUMMARY: MESSAGE PROVIDES ADDITIONAL RATIONALE TO SUPPORT
PROPOSED COPRODUCTION OF DRAGON ANTI-TANK MISSILE IN EUROPE.

UNITED KINGDOM APPEARS BEST CANDIDATE FOR LICENSING ARRANGMENT
AND FRG SEEMS POSSIBLE PARTICIPANT IF DRAGON WERE COPRODUCED
IN EUROPE. MCDONNELL-DOUGLAS CORP., ENGINEERING DEVELOPMENT
CONTRACTOR FOR DRAGON, HAS INDICATED (INFORMALLY) US INDUSTRY
SUPPORT FOR PROPOSAL. END SUMMARY.

1. IN REF A, MISSION OUTLINED APPARENT IMBALANCE IN ANTI-TANK
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WEAPONS IN ALLIED FORCES OF THE CENTRAL REGION. IN REF B,
MISSION SUGGESTED WASHINGTON CONSIDERATION OF AN AGREEMENT
WITH SOME ALLIED COUNTRY TO PRODUCE THE US DRAGON ANTI-
TANK SYSTEM UNDER LICENSE, FOR USE IN THE FORCES OF THE

EUROPEAN ALLIES.

2. MISSION RECOMMENDS CONSIDERATION OF THE UNITED KINGDOM AS ALLIED COUNTRY THAT HAS TECHNOLOGY BASE TO ACCOMMODATE PRODUCTION OF DRAGON AND IS NOT INVOLVED IN THE LONG RANGE HOT AND MILAN ANTI-TANK PROGRAMS UNDERWAY JOINTLY IN THE FRG AND FRANCE. UK SWINGFIRE IS A LONG RANGE SYSTEM WHICH IS TOO HEAVY AND EXPENSIVE TO BE DEPLOYED IN ADEQUATE NUMBERS.

3. UNITED KINGDOM MOD REPRESENTATIVES HAVE INDICATED INFORMALLY TO MISSION REPS THAT THEY WANT VERY MUCH TO INCREASE NUMBERS OF MODERN ANTI-TANK WEAPONS IN BRITISH FORCES. UK HAS BEEN LEANING TOWARD MILAN SYSTEM BECAUSE OF LONGER RANGE THAN DRAGON AND BECAUSE OF DESIRE TO SUPPORT EUROPEAN ARMS' PRODUCTION BASE (REF C), BUT BALANCE OF PAYMENTS BUDGETARY PROBLEMS HAVE PREVENTED ANY PROCUREMENT. CO-PRODUCTION OF DRAGON COULD REMOVE BALANCE OF PAYMENTS OBSTACLE AND DRAGON COST IS ONLY ONE-FOURTH THAT OF MILAN.

4. AS MISSION UNDERSTOOD IT, WASHINGTON ANTI-TANK BRIEFING PRESENTED TO DPC IN OCTOBER 1974 (REF D). ARGUED THAT THE TERRAIN PROFILE OF THE NORTH GERMAN PLAINS HAS A CONSIDERABLY HIGHER PERCENTAGE OF LINE-OF-SIGHT ENGAGEMENT POSSIBILITIES AT RANGES LESS THAN 1,000 METER THAN AT LONGER RANGES (EVEN TO GREATER DEGREE THAN IS THE CASE FARTHER TO THE SOUTH). THUS, DRAGON WOULD SEEM EVEN MORE APPROPRIATE FOR THE BRITISH ARMY OF THE RHEIN THAN FOR THE US FORCES IN THE SOUTHERN HALF OF THE CENTRAL REGION.

5. FOR WASHINGTON INFORMATION, MCDONNELL-DOUGLAS CORPS. REPRESENTATIVE IN EUROPE HAS INDICATED INTEREST IN DRAGON CO-PRODUCTION IN EUROPE. MISSION NOTES IN THIS REGARD THAT THE US MIGHT ELECT TO RETAIN CERTAIN TECHNOLOGY (DRAGON NIGHT SIGHT, FOR EXAMPLE) BUT THIS RESERVATION NEED NOT STOP

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AN AGREEMENT TO COPRODUCE THE BASIC SYSTEM.

6. OTHER EUROPEAN ALLIES WOULD HAVE TO AGREE TO PURCHASE DRAGON FROM UK PRODUCTION IN ORDER TO JUSTIFY OPENING UK LINE. FRG IS A KEY CANDIDATE SINCE THE FRG ANTI-TANK BRIEFING TO THE EWG IN MAY 74 (REF E) INDICATED INTENT TO PROCURE 1,000 METER SYSTEM, BUT FRG REPS STATED INFORMALLY TO MISSION OFFICER THAT FRG HAS NOT DECIDED WHETHER TO PURCHASE EXISTING SYSTEMS OR DEVELOP A NEW FRG SYSTEM. AN FRG PURCHASE OF DRAGON WOULD BE MORE LIKELY IF SYSTEM WERE COPRODUCED IN EUROPE. IF FRG AGREED TO PARTICIPATE, UK COULD INTRODUCE DRAGON AS A NATO PROJECT UNDER AEGIS OF THE CONFERENCE OF NATIONAL ARMAMENTS DIRECTORS. BRUCE

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ALL NATO CAPITALS

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